

Thanks!

Child & Family Services 2007 Caseworker of the Year Awards



“ On behalf of the citizens of Utah we would like to thank all Child & Family Services workers for their outstanding work! ”

— Governor Jon Huntsman & First Lady Mary Kaye Huntsman

JOB  
WELL  
DONE!

“ As a Child & Family Services Board Member it is a privilege to work with and honor all DCFS Caseworkers. The noble work they do is vital to our communities’ well-being. ”

— Cindy Ensign





# The Best Christmas Gift a Parent Can Give.

Because of Meth addiction, Jami went to jail last January. Her four kids, Christian, Ashley, Heaven and Jayden tearfully packed their belongings into grocery bags, reluctantly got in the state vehicle and were taken to a foster home. "We thought we were going to be adopted," remembers Ashley, 11.

Jami needed help, "I just couldn't get my head on straight," she admits. Jami quickly realized Child and Family Services was offering her a chance to quit drugs and get her children back.

It was difficult, but worth it - Jami and her kids are now together again. As the kids entered their Mom's new apartment for the first time, they were greeted with a warm "Welcome Home" from Mom, their caseworker and foster parents. Christian, 12, smiled widely and exclaimed, "Now we're home together for Christmas!"





# No Town Is Too Far Away.



From Logan to St. George, if a child  
needs help, Delton is there.



As a Child and Family Services foster care worker, Delton drives about 3,800 miles every month to meet with children and families. "No foster family is too far away for me to visit," says Delton.

Delton surrounds the child and family with a team of community partners and services to help them back on the highway to success.

*Thanks Delton!*



# The success story of reunification begins with one family willing to help another.

While fostering five-year-old Kimmie, Jessica, a Salt Lake City foster parent, also served as a “peer parent” to Kimmie’s mother, Vickie, a new immigrant from Mexico.

A native of Puerto Rico, Jessica communicated in Spanish and helped Vickie adjust to the American culture. Jessica mentored Vickie and helped her strengthen her parenting abilities so that she could take care of Kimmie again.



*“Parents of children in foster care are often portrayed as uncaring or neglectful, but some of them just lack simple parenting skills,” says Jessica. “I am not here to judge, but to appropriately try to make a difference in a child’s life.”*

All parents need support to be successful. Jessica still supports Vickie and, every now and again, provides child care for Kimmie.

Vickie and Kimmie are not the only family to benefit from the foster care program; Jessica says the experience of foster parenting has strengthened her own family too!

For information on becoming a foster/adoptive parent, go to [utahfostercare.org](http://utahfostercare.org)



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## Repetitive Behaviors. Temper Tantrums. Non-Verbal.

*Robin was overwhelmed and needed help fast.*

John and Robin Kirton of Murray have six beautiful children, ages 3 to 14. Each child is unique in their own way and each is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

Life isn't easy when you are a family of eight, living in a three-bedroom house with only one income. It is even harder when all six of your children have a developmental disorder.

In 2006 Robin expressed her stress and frustration to a social worker. A Child and Family Services worker was called out to meet with Robin and assess her family's situation.

The Kirton's children were removed from the home until Robin was able to get into counseling and establish a support system for those times when John couldn't be there to help.

"Looking back, I see it was a mixed blessing," says Robin. "We learned about programs and benefits that we didn't even know existed. Plus, I've got the support I need to make it through."

John agrees. "If it weren't for our involvement with Child and Family Services our kids wouldn't have the help they so needed."

For more information about autism in Utah visit <http://health.utah.gov/autism>



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BECAUSE EVERY CHILD  
NEEDS A VALENTINE



Last year Child and Family Services reunited over 600 kids with their primary caretakers and worked with 4,500 Utah children towards safely remaining in their own homes.



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*Lisa Rock, Foster Mom,  
is excited to say.....  
.....Viviana officially  
joined her family today!*

*For centuries expectant mothers have been showered with gifts,  
advice and comical anecdotes in preparation for their child's arrival.*

*At Lisa Rock's shower, however,  
there are no rattles, onesies, burp rags or bottles.*

*This mother-to-be has been Viviana's foster mom for nearly a year.*

### *\* \* \* Teenager Shower \* \* \**

*The shower is thrown in celebration of 17-year-old Viviana's adoption.*

*"I already felt like part of the family," says Viviana, "But now it's official."  
She has a permanent place to call home, now and for the rest of her life.*

*Lisa is guiding her daughter into young adulthood;  
celebrating milestones like prom dresses, first cars and touring colleges.*

*"Vivi's a great kid with big plans for her future," beams Lisa.  
"I really think the best years of our relationship are ahead of us."*

*For more information on becoming  
a foster/adoptive parent, go to  
[utahfostercare.org](http://utahfostercare.org)*

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**My father first sexually abused me when I was 14 months old. He didn't stop until I was 14 years old.**

**When I was 16, he confessed to his bishop and then to police. My dad was not allowed to return to our home and we were assigned a Child and Family Services caseworker to make sure the abuse stopped.**

**Soon after, mom requested my sister and I be placed in foster care. I was upset at first, but foster care gave me a place to heal and be safe. My caseworkers treated me like a real person with potential, not a victim.**



## *The Story Gets Better*

**In 2003, I co-founded uFOSTERsuccess, a non-profit family of survivors previously in foster care as children. I also serve on the National Advisory Board for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the Governor-Appointed Board of Child and Family Services. I am most proud of being a loving and devoted mother to my daughter.**

**I know first hand that children from tragic personal circumstances have enormous potential to lead productive and happy lives and I want all children in foster care to know they are just as important and valuable as the children of royalty.**

**None of this would be possible if it weren't for the bishop, the police, my high school resource officer, my caseworkers and all of the people who supported me along the way.**

*Thanks for helping me become me!*  
*-Barbara*



For more information on uFOSTERsuccess go to [www.ufostersuccess.org](http://www.ufostersuccess.org)



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# Caden's Story

When I was taken away from my mom,  
it was terrible.

I had to live in two other places,  
with my aunt and another person.



## My Story Gets Better

And then I got to go back with my mom and I said, "I want  
my mom", and my mom said, "I am your mom."

And my life has been better.

My mom is better than anyone in the world!

**Thanks everyone, Caden**



8 years later, mom and Caden relax at home.

For information on becoming a foster parent, go to [utahfostercare.org](http://utahfostercare.org)



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# Christy's Story

Growing up in California, I was raised by my grandparents, as my mother was an alcoholic and I didn't know my father.

I never felt like I fit in with other kids and started drinking at the age of 12. By the time I was 13, I had dropped out of school and was a full blown meth addict.

At the young age of 17, I learned I was pregnant. I had my little boy, Caden, when I was 18. One year later I moved to Utah, hoping to make a better life. Regardless of the love I had for my son, I wasn't ready to live drug free.

Soon after moving to Utah, my family contacted Child and Family Services and Caden was placed in a foster home.

## This story gets better.

After experiencing homelessness, a couple of suicide attempts, jail time and some self-reflection, I decided to find recovery. In January 2001 I quit everything, entered rehab and, within one year, regained custody of Caden.

I have been sober for seven years now and have full custody of my son. I am married with three beautiful children, Caden, Aspen and Madiegan, and am grateful and proud to be the mom and person I always wanted to be, finally!

Thank you, to all of the DCFS workers, Judges, law enforcement officials, substance abuse counselors and, especially, to my family. Without help from all of you I would not be the person I am today.

Thanks for helping me become me, Christy.



For information on meth addiction go to [www.endmethnow.org](http://www.endmethnow.org)



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# Daniel's Story...

Mom and Dad loved each other, but they both had problems. They separated when I was 12, and I went with Dad.

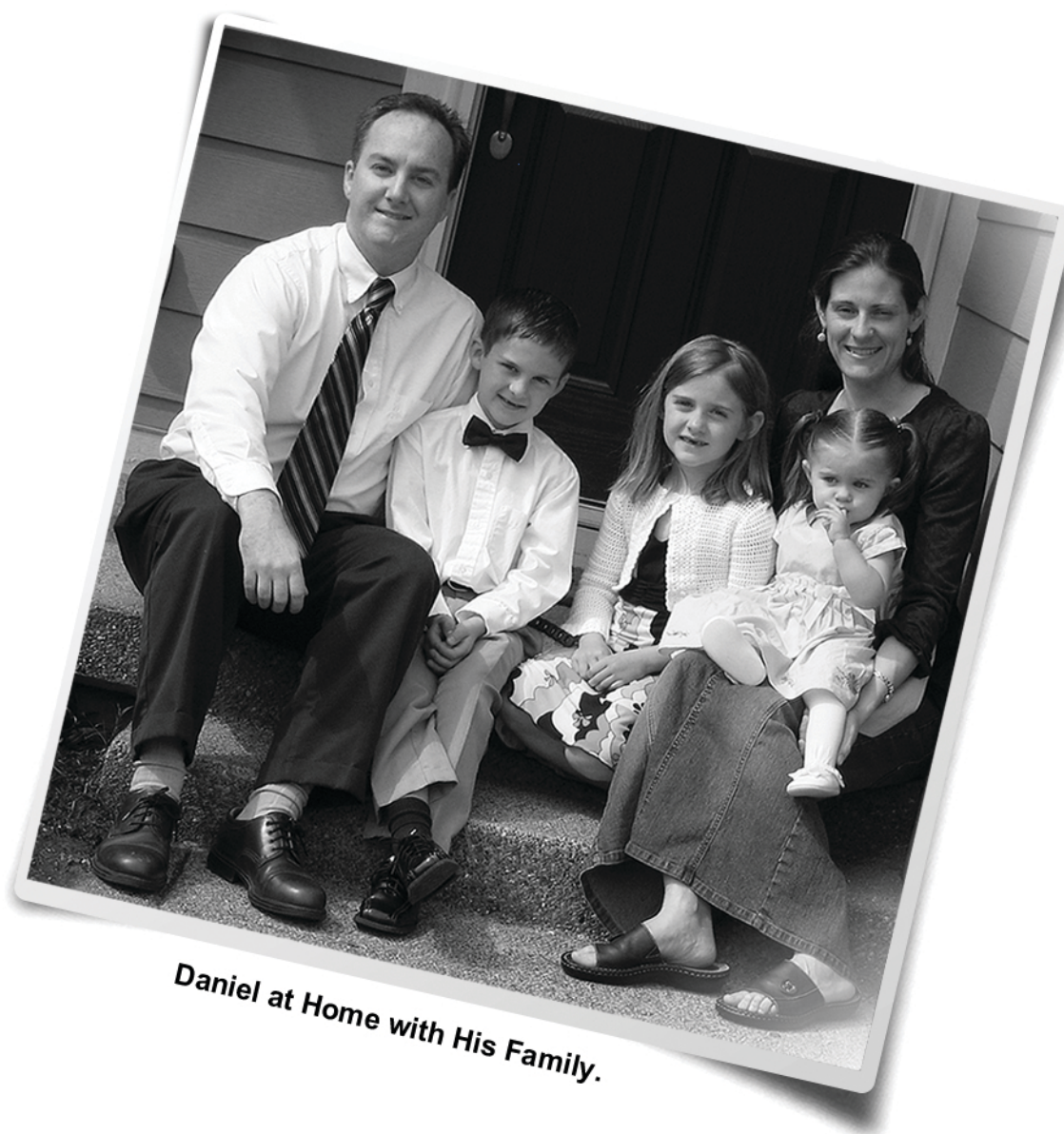
We lived in a tent in the mountains. No running water. No electricity. No school. Little food. Less supervision.

Dad would hitchhike down the mountain to find odd jobs and be gone for days at a time.

My job was to care for a small herd of goats. Sometimes I got lost in the mountains and just slept under the trees.

One day my dad took me with him. We hitchhiked to a job in Orem. When the job was over, we wandered around, sleeping in the doorways of stores or in the shelter of dumpsters. We were tired, hungry, dirty, homeless and hopeless when we reached Provo's Pioneer Park.

I felt like my dad had given up, so I walked over to the Child and Family Services office and asked for help.



*Daniel at Home with His Family.*

## His Story Gets Better....

I remember my caseworker saying, "Daniel, of all the children I have ever worked with, I wouldn't blame you if you just gave up on yourself and the world. But you do have a choice. You can choose to be successful anyway."

Eventually I got to live in a loving foster home and go back to school and church. With the help of Child and Family Services and counseling, I began rebuilding my relationship with my mom and dad.

When I was 17, I moved out of my foster home, lived on my own, and put myself through my senior year of high school.

At 19, I went on a two-year LDS mission to Okayama, Japan. When I came home, I earned a Bachelor's degree from UVU and a MBA from BYU. I now work in the job of my dreams for a Fortune 50 company and live in Washington with my wife and our three beautiful children.

Thanks Utah Child and Family Services and my foster home for helping me prepare to live the successful life I chose. You invested in me: my life is about maximizing the return on your investment in service to others.

For information on becoming a foster parent, go to [utahfostercare.org](http://utahfostercare.org)



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# A WORK OF HEART

Keena has always loved working with kids. She's been a school teacher, group home parent, foster parent to more than 260 children, foster parent trainer and, for the past 14 years, a Child and Family Services employee.

Keena understands the special needs of children in foster care and works directly with foster parents to help them succeed at parenting all children. She puts her whole heart into supporting, training and consulting with foster parents.

"Keena's ability to match the right foster parents with youth is like a work of art," says Western Region Direct Brent Platt. "She has the unique talent of recommending what seems to be the best placement for each child."

*Thanks  
Keena!*



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